

THE SOCIAL PIRATES

The Newest Kalem Picture Now Being Presented at the Leading Motion Picture Theatres in Greater New York

Plot by George Bronson Howard
Novelization by Hugh C. Weir

Story No. 9

THE MISSING MILLIONAIRE

Two American girls, Mona Hartley and Mary Burnett, set about punishing the "Wolves of Society" through their check books. This is the story of their ninth adventure.

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ROLAND MAXWELL glanced curiously from the table as the visitors were ushered into his room. One of the reasons for his success was his human curiosity in people, whether high or low. The big Wall Street "plunger" was fond of saying that there was no subject so interesting as the study of a human face—that the panorama of a city street held far more expression and inspiration than the greatest book ever written, or the most eloquent sermon ever preached. With his first glance at his present visitors he rose impulsively to his feet. They were two young and very pretty women—and in some vaguely indefinable way different from the young women with whom his meteoric career had brought him into contact. He fumbled for their cards, which the servant had left on the table that served him as a private desk.

"Mr. Maxwell," said the foremost of the two young women in a direct business-like tone. And at his nod of affirmation, "My name is Miss Hartley. And this is Miss Burnett. I know you are a busy man," she continued, "and we are not going to take up much of your time. The reason for our visit briefly is this—She took from her hand bag a folded newspaper, and her daintily gloved finger pointed to a group of heavy head-lines on the first page.

Maxwell shrugged, and laughed rather impatiently. "Does the newspaper exaggerate?" continued his questioner. "No—as a matter of fact it tells the exact truth," Maxwell shrugged again. More so-called "Social Workers," and "Women with a mission." But he veiled the thought and the resultant disappointment, and waited for them to continue.

"Then you have determined to give half of the fortune which you have made in the manufacture and sale of war munitions to practicable charity?" continued the charming questioner. Maxwell bowed again silently.

"No, we have not come to help you spend it," said the interviewer quickly, as though divining his thought. "We don't even intend to ask you for a donation for any pet charities. It so happens that we are interested in much the same things as you are, and as a business proposition it occurred to us that quite possibly we could work in connection in several directions." Then Mona outlined a plan to have him help them in their campaign of retribution against different people.

"You interest me, young woman," said Roland Maxwell. "Please go on." For the better part of half an hour Mona talked, with an occasional contribution from Mary. Maxwell himself spoke hardly half a dozen sentences. He made it plain that his role was that of listener, perhaps judge. It was true that he had determined to devote half of the spectacular fortune which the sale of war munitions had brought him to charity. And in an ill-advised moment he had given his intention to a newspaper reporter. The result had been that he had been swamped with letters and telegrams and requests for personal interviews, which had driven him to the verge of distraction, and which at the end had left him in a condition of almost complete disgust. It was one matter to determine calmly to spend several million dollars for the public good. But it was quite another matter to be besieged by a stream of interviewers, who presented all manner of wild, impracticable schemes for the spending of those millions, and who took it as a personal affront when he didn't coincide with their visionary plans.

Mona looked at her watch suddenly, and rose abruptly to her feet. "We have kept you long enough, Mr. Maxwell. But I hope that we have convinced you, at least, of our sincerity and practicability. If we can be of any further service to you, it is possible to reach us at most any time. We are registered at this same hotel, ourselves, for the present." Maxwell sat in reverie for some time after they had gone.

The tinkle of his telephone aroused Maxwell suddenly. He knocked out his pipe, and put the receiver of the instrument to his ear. "Come in," he growled after a moment's pause over the wire. The frown returned to his face, but this time it was an entirely different character, and when the door of his suite again opened, he crossed the floor with his features set coldly and his eyes narrowed grimly.

Two men entered the room, both with outstretched hands, and effusive smiles. Regardless of the obvious coldness in Maxwell's attitude, they caught his hands, and pumped them up and down with expansive cordiality, after which they lighted fresh cigars, and stood surveying him with their building comas. "If possible increasing instead of diminishing," said the first of the two.

"Well, come to the point, Durkin," snapped Maxwell. "I know you are here for some selfish motive. And you, too, Wentworth," addressing the other, "if you have anything really important to say, be quick about it. I am a very busy man just now."

"Of course, you are! Don't we know it?" purred Durkin, affecting to disregard the other's curtneas. "And I have an idea that you will be a whole lot busier after you hear what we have to offer!"

"Just as I am!" echoed his companion, parrot-like. "Go to it," growled Maxwell, opening his watch expressively.



DOCTOR LUDLOW SPRANG BACK FROM MONA'S SIDE AND RUSHED TOWARD THE STRUGGLING PAIR.

now it was fairly clear, and the girl had an unobstructed view on either side of her. For a moment she thought she had lost the two men, of whom she was in search, and then she gave a little exclamation of relief. They were mounting the wide sweep of stairs on the farther side of the room. She strode carelessly after them, and followed up the stairs, hardly a dozen feet behind them, and in ample time to see them take their places at one of the rows of desks and draw a hotel letter-head out of the rack.

Mary snatched into the room, and slipped the blotter into her handbag, and hurried excitedly back to the elevator, and back to her room. Mona was awaiting her eagerly, and listened closely to her report. "All that we need now is a mirror," finished the girl. Then we can read the blotter and will have a real Sherlock Holmes clue!"

Mona smiled. "I am afraid, dear, that blotters are not read with mirrors. I have read with a mirror, but I have never read with a blotter. However, we can try it." For the better part of an hour the two sought indignantly to gather the message of the telltale blotter, holding a mirror in all kinds of lights and angles and then going so far as to try the effect of a magnifying glass—but all to no purpose. The impression of the envelope's address had left out several letters almost entirely, and those which remained were so faint and blurred that at the end of an hour the two owned themselves fairly beaten.

"Well, we have done our best!" said Mona. "There is some satisfaction in that thought. Perhaps there will be another development in the situation soon which will set us on the right track!" Little did she dream how soon such a development was to occur. The sinister situation into which it was to plunge them!

It was shortly after 8 o'clock the next morning when the final inkling of the startling mystery, which sealed in an envelope, Mary saw them soon to claim the attention of the entire city, first intruded itself into the usually well-ordered routine of life at the Grand Hotel. This was nothing less than the fact that the occupant of Suite No. 124 had disappeared as thoroughly as though the earth had opened suddenly and swallowed him bodily. Such a situation would have been sufficiently disquieting had the central figure of the mystery been an ordinary personage without any individual claim on public attention. But when it was learned that the missing occupant of Suite No. 124 was Roland Maxwell, the millionaire plunger and amateur philanthropist, the official staff of the Grand Hotel, from the night clerk up to the chief of the detective state, and from the gimlet-eyed individual up to the august general manager himself, were thrown into a condition of consternation bordering on panic.

A belated bellboy, chided by Mona rather sharply for his delay in answering her call button, brought to the night clerk up to the chief of the detective state, and from the gimlet-eyed individual up to the august general manager himself, were thrown into a condition of consternation bordering on panic.

"Wait a moment," called Mary excitedly. "I believe we have it." Her pencil skimmed over the sheet of paper which she had jotted down with the rest of the puzzle. Let's see, the cryptic letters, "Eureka!" she cried. "I matches perfectly. Restview Sanitarium, Claremont. I wonder if we can have as much success with the rest of the puzzle. Let's see. A sanitarium naturally suggests a doctor. That may be the explanation of the first 'P' in our top line. Turn to the physicians, Mary, and see what we find under the letter 'L'. That ought to be the first letter of our man's last name."

Mary read through the finely printed names of physicians, her fingers travelling slowly down the page. "Ludlow—Doctor Walter Ludlow," she said dubiously as she tried to pencil again busily with the letters of the puzzle. She sprang to her feet decidedly.

"Our address reads 'Doctor Walter Ludlow, Restview Sanitarium, Claremont,'" she said. "I think we can decipher its secret."

Mona carried the blotter to the window, and for several moments staring at the reflection of its broken letters in a hand mirror.

"Bring me a telephone directory," Mary, she called suddenly. As the other obeyed, Mona read aloud the signifying letters in the glass. When jotted down on paper they made the following broken words:

Do W I R S a i m
Re v S a i m
Cl em t.

Quite evidently when completed, the words were an address. "Turn to the Claremont section of the directory," directed Mona. "I think we are fairly safe in assuming that is our point of departure. Now for the rest of it. Run your finger over the names and places listed under the letter R—and see what you find."

For a few moments Mary read steadily, as directed, Mona shaking her head dubiously as she tried in vain to make any of the words match with the fragmentary letters before her.

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The next moment a haggard figure burst into the corridor, with a uniformed attendant hanging to his arms, and endeavoring to drag him back. It was Rowland Maxwell. With a muttered curse, Doctor Ludlow sprang back from Mona's side and rushed toward the struggling pair. Before he could reach them, Maxwell, with a sudden twist, had jerked himself free from the attendant's arms and hurled the guard limping into a corner. Without a word Doctor Ludlow flung himself on Maxwell's shoulders, and the two swayed back and forth, Ludlow forcing the refractory "patient" back into the hall from which he had escaped.

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